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Washington Background

Any Number Play: Blame It on CIA

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ATTACKING the Central Intelligence Agency is, as Sen. Frank Lausche (D., Ohio) has remarked, like shooting fish in a barrel. No matter how outlandish the charge may be, the CIA, because of the nature of its operations, cannot answer back.

Critics of Administration policy in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic and elsewhere seem to be eager to credit any accusation leveled at the CIA if it tends to support the assumption that the agency is meddling in the internal affairs of another country.

One statement circulated a few months ago was that the CIA dressed its agents in the garb of Vietcong Communists and sent them among the South Vietnamese to rape women and kill old men and children and then place the blame upon the Vietcong.

When the statement was made it was picked up by Peking and Moscow and publicized throughout the world. One Communist broadcast said, "United States officials confirm the charges we have been making about the Central Intelligence Agency."

THE wife of a retired Marine Corps officer, whose application for employment was turned down by the CIA because the medical evaluation of the state of his health showed that he was suffering from high blood pressure, has sued the CIA, alleging that during his pre-employment examination he had been given certain drugs. After he was



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turned down, police in Virginia Beach, Va., determined that the officer had committed suicide, and it is the contention of his wife that it was the drugs which caused him to take his life.

The CIA has made no denial of the charge, but members of the subcommittee of the Senate Armed Forces Committee who supervise the actions of the CIA say that pre-employment examinations involve no administration of drugs of any kind.

The latest charges against the CIA have been made by Fidel Castro, who claims that Cuban exiles who tried to slip into Havana some days ago were sent by the CIA with instructions to assassinate the Cuban Premier. The exile group calls itself Commandos L.

Again the CIA has adhered to its policy of not commenting on charges made against it. But a careful examination by the Senate supervisory group has established that the Cuban exiles received no support or guidance whatever by the CIA.

THE foreign press has made a practice of playing up every accusation made against the CIA, no matter how bizarre. A few months ago some British newspapers carried a story that a former Royal Air Force pilot, currently under indictment in the United States for illegally exporting B-26 planes to Portugal, was actually piloting the planes to their destination for the CIA. And last May an American magazine carried a story quoting the pilot as saying that he was a special project airman for the CIA and that his defense would center around that claim.

Commenting on this case, Sen. Stuart Symington (D., Mo.), a member of the Armed Forces Committee, said the other day that the pilot's statement is not true and that there is no information to connect his activities with the CIA. He noted that a United States Attorney had predicted that it will soon become a standard defense in such cases. Because the CIA did have a hand in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion, there are many persons in official, as well as unofficial, life, who are disposed to believe the worst about the intelligence agency.

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